

# THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Walter Pincus analyzes one of the contracts that Henry Waxman is looking at to determine how much more Blackwater's mercenaries are costing us than a law-abiding US soldier. Pincus notes that Petraeus makes roughly \$493 a day. This doesn't appear to include benefits; figuring benefits make up 1/3 of someone's compensation—which in the private sector is often about right, but in the military is probably too small—then Petraeus might cost us, the taxpayer, \$750 a day. That's for our top commander in Iraq, \$750 a day.

And here's how a Blackwater employee gets charged:

Average day-to-day personnel, \$600/day salary paid by Blackwater  
Blackwater bills Regency, \$850/day for operators  
Regency bills ESS an average of \$1100/day for all types of employees  
ESS charges Halliburton which charges the US based on a per-meal basis (I'm going to go out on a limb and guess that Halliburton has some profit worked into this)

A married Iraqi sergeant serving in Iraq makes about \$170/day [updated for clarity].

No wonder Bush needs another \$200 billion. He's outsourcing the actual fighting of this war to forces that cost six times as much as it would if our military still did the fighting.